



City of Richmond Office of the Inspector General: Investigative Report

OIG CASE #: 26-0021-C
INSPECTOR GENERAL FOSTER CURTISS

Executive Summary

The City of Richmond (COR) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated an investigation on May 05, 2026, after receiving a formal complaint alleging that a City of Richmond Department of Social Services (DSS) employee (“SUBJECT 1”), knowingly facilitated Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) fraud. The complainant alleged that the SUBJECT permitted an unauthorized individual, Mr. Brandon Brown (“SUBJECT 2”), to receive SNAP benefits for a minor child, despite having received documentation confirming the child resides with his mother and has never resided with SUBJECT 2. The complainant further alleges that SUBJECT 1 actions are motivated by a personal relationship with SUBJECT 2 and that SUBJECT 1 is potentially receiving a portion of the illicit benefits. The OIG investigated allegations that the SUBJECT(s) abused their authority and violated COR policies, DSS procedures, and state law regarding the administration of public benefits. The OIG has reached the following preliminary finding.

- **Alleged Facilitation of SNAP Fraud:** SUBJECT 2 allegedly knowingly processed or maintained SNAP benefits for a household address where the beneficiary child does not reside. Despite receiving proof of the child’s actual residence, SUBJECT 2 allegedly provided ongoing justifications to maintain the fraudulent enrollment. Based on the investigative findings, the OIG is determining whether the allegations that the SUBJECT(s) acted with intent to defraud the government and violated departmental conflict-of-interest policies are unsubstantiated.

Background

On May 05, 2026, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received a complaint alleging that a City of Richmond Department of Social Services (DSS) employee (SUBJECT 1) has engaged in official misconduct. Specifically, the complainant alleged that the SUBJECT has knowingly allowed SUBJECT 2 to claim SNAP benefits for his minor child, while aware that the child resides exclusively with his mother. The complainant asserted that they had previously provided SUBJECT 1 with evidence of the child’s residency, but SUBJECT 1 had ignored this proof, citing personal ties to Mr. Brown as the potential motivation for the oversight. The complainant further alleges that SUBJECT 1’s conduct constitutes systemic corruption within the local DSS office and has requested both the termination of SUBJECT 1 and a criminal investigation into potential collusion and the misappropriation of government funds.

Observations

The investigation consisted of a comprehensive review of benefit records and formal interviews conducted between May 05, 2026, and June 08, 2026. The OIG obtained and analyzed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for SUBJECT 2, as well as the

corresponding records for the minor child's mother. The OIG also conducted an interview with a DSS Supervisor.

During the interview with the DSS Supervisor, it was determined that both SUBJECT 2 and the child's mother were receiving SNAP benefits. Information revealed during the interview indicated that the child's mother was receiving SNAP benefits for the child. The OIG learned during the interview that DSS recipients are required to submit interim reports every six months in order to maintain benefits through DSS. It was discovered during the interview that on October 15, 2025, an interim Report Request for Action was mailed out to the address of record for the child's mother, in order for her SNAP benefits to continue for the month of December. The report mailed out to the child's mother was due on November 05, 2025. DSS did not receive the required information from the child's mother, and DSS then sent a reminder email to the child's mother on November 10, 2026.

Per DSS, it is up to all DSS recipients to notify DSS as soon as possible if any benefit recipients have changed their address. The OIG also learned during the interview that the Interim Report mailed out by DSS was not "returned to sender."

Additionally, on April 10, 2026, DSS received custody documents relating to the child. Per the custody documents, both parents have joint legal custody of the child. Per DSS, if the parties involved do not share the same household, only one parent is eligible to receive SNAP benefits for the child.

The OIG was advised that, per DSS policy, whichever parent applies for SNAP benefits first receives the benefits, on a first-come, first-served basis. The parent who is not receiving benefits for the child and wishes to receive SNAP benefits for the child must appeal to DSS and go through the DSS appeals process, at which point DSS will attempt to determine where the child is residing.

After the child's mother did not renew her SNAP benefits with DSS, the SUBJECT then applied for benefits for the child, and since the SUBJECT has joint legal custody of the child, the SUBJECT is entitled to receive such benefits.

The OIG also learned that around the same time OIG received the tip allegation, the child's mother contacted DSS (the DSS employee mentioned in the allegation) and requested to speak with a supervisor, as the child's mother was attempting to re-add the child to her SNAP benefits. The DSS Supervisor advised the child's mother that, because there is no shared household between the mother, father, and child, only one parent is eligible to receive SNAP benefits for that child. It was explained to OIG that the child's mother informed the DSS supervisor that the child lives with her, and that she could provide proof via her counselor who often visits her residence and has witnessed the child residing with her. DSS advised the child's mother to send in any proof they may have of the child residing with her and not the SUBJECT, and DSS would attempt to review the matter. As of the date of the interview with the DSS supervisor, DSS has not received anything additional from the child's mother.

During the interview with the DSS supervisor, OIG learned that SUBJECT 2 added the minor child to his household benefits in February 2026, coinciding with his annual benefits renewal. Regarding the administration of these files, DSS management advised OIG that, based on their internal audit of the SUBJECT 2's file and the child's mother's file, all actions were consistent with current DSS policy.

Later in the interview with the DSS supervisor, OIG learned that in August of 2025, the child was removed from the father's SNAP benefits, as DSS received a telephone call from Child and Family Services informing DSS that SUBJECT 2 and the child's mother had separated, and that the child was residing full-time with the child's mother. DSS informed OIG that the child's benefits were removed from the father's benefits and reassigned to the child's mother in August of 2025. During that time, the DSS employee mentioned in the allegation was not the DSS caseworker assigned to either parent, as their cases are always rotating.

DSS confirmed with OIG that they have not received any proof or documents that the child is residing full-time with the child's mother, and that is the reason SUBJECT 2 is currently receiving DSS benefits for that child.

OIG also confirmed with DSS that SUBJECT 2 did not receive any beneficial treatment from any DSS worker regarding SUBJECT 2's benefit status, and that all DSS caseworkers involved with SUBJECT 2 and the child's mother's DSS benefits followed the policies and procedures set forth by DSS.

Allegations and Findings

Allegation (COR/OIG): A report or claim of potential fraud, waste, or abuse involving the COR. Allegations may be **received** by OIG from the public, the COR employees, contractors, or other sources, or **initiated** by OIG through proactive reviews.

Classification after OIG inquiry/investigation:

- **Substantiated:** Evidence meets the applicable standard of proof (e.g., **preponderance of the evidence**) and indicates the alleged conduct likely occurred.
- **Unsubstantiated:** Evidence does **not** meet that standard. This classification does **not** state the claim is false; it reflects insufficient evidence to prove it.

Note: "Preponderance of the evidence" means **more likely than not**. If OIG policy uses additional outcomes (e.g., **partially substantiated, inconclusive**), those may be applied as appropriate.

Based on the information reviewed during the investigation, the OIG concludes that the allegation is **unsubstantiated**. No financial loss to the COR was identified.

Foster Curtiss

Foster Curtiss, Inspector General